

L180 and L181

Robert H. Szymanski (L145)

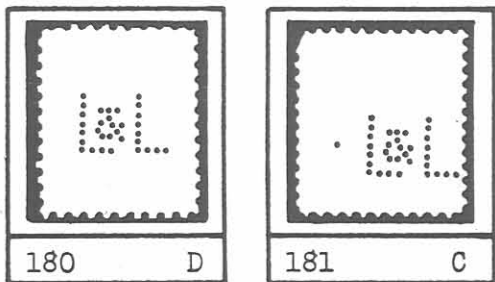


Figure 1. Perfin Patterns L180 & L181

After 10 Days Return to
SAM B. STOY, Manager
 332 PINE STREET
 SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.



Figure 2 - Sam B. Stoy, Manager

IF NOT DELIVERED IN TEN DAYS RETURN TO
LAW UNION & ROCK INSURANCE CO., Ltd.
 OF LONDON
 HARRY H. SMITH, Manager
 Pacific Coast Department
 433 CALIFORNIA STREET - SAN FRANCISCO
SAM B. STOY, Manager
 332 Pine Street
 San Francisco, Cal.

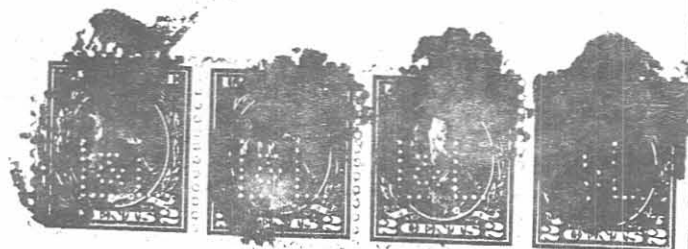


Figure 3 - The Problem Solver

Figure 1 showing both perfin patterns provides the observation that perfin pattern L181 appears to be nothing more than pattern L180 with a single control hole to the left of the initials. The current reference (*The Catalog of United States Perfins*, Balough & Balough, 1979, The Perfins Club) list both of these as being used in San Francisco, California - strange for a control hole to be listed as the only separate listing and in the same city? In addition, the user of pattern L180 is listed as Wm W. Gilmore Mgr Pac Dept. That name is hardly a clear match to "L&L". No user is listed for pattern L181.

To confuse matters more, the partial envelope shown in Figure 2 lists Sam B. Stoy, Manager. This envelope, which has been photographically reduced to fit this page, has an April 17, 1919 postmark. It is franked with a 2 cent Washington head stamp punched with perfin pattern L181. The perfin is inverted and the control hole does show on the right edge of the stamp between the third and fourth line of the cancellation. So now we have two identifications which ask more questions than they give answers!

The second partial envelope, shown photographically reduced in Figure 3, is a collector's dream come true. The corner card's identification of Law Union & Rock Insurance Company, Ltd. of London. A British company, would be very familiar with the value of perfin usage and the name has three "L" to pick from. That's a good start, but notice the bottom correction, "Sam B. Stoy, Manager, 332 Pine Street, San Francisco, Cal." That matches the corner card of Figure 2 showing it was proper usage. The lined out items do not show up all that well in the reproduction but they are clearly readable as follows: the first line is Harry H. Smith, Manager; the second line is Insurance Exchange Building; and the third is the street address of 433 California Street. We now have three addresses and names to go with one already identified! This would be a good ending with information to be forwarded to the US Catalog editor, BUT there is more!

If you look closely at the four connected stamps in Figure 3, which are all nicely centered, you will note that the two end stamps are L181 with control holes - the left-hand most easily seen in the heavy cancel

and the right-hand one is not as easily seen in the margin slightly higher up because each perfin is punched a little higher as you go from the left to right. The two interior perfins are L180 without the control hole.

With four attached stamps in a horizontal row, on piece, it may be concluded that these two perfins should really be considered as one and full size illustrations have been forwarded to the US Catalog Editor.